



## **Does Your Home Have a Radon Problem?**

Radon is a naturally occurring, radioactive gas. It forms when uranium breaks down in soil, rock, and water. You can't see, smell, or taste radon. It gets into the air you breathe indoors, primarily from soil under your home and other buildings.

Radon can get into any type of building (homes, offices and schools), which can cause high indoor radon levels. However, you are most likely to get your greatest exposure at home since that is where you spend most of your time.

### ***Radon Risks***

Radon is a risk because it decays into radioactive particles that can get trapped in your lungs when you breathe. These particles break down and release small bursts of energy that can damage lung tissue and lead to lung cancer. Your chances of getting lung cancer from radon depend mostly on how much radon is in your home, the amount of time you spend in your home, and if you smoke or have ever smoked.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has an action level of 4 Pico Curies per liter (pCi/L). This means you should install radon reduction systems in your home if the radon level is 4 pCi/L or higher. Radon reduction systems are installed by qualified professionals and are not very expensive. In fact, some systems can reduce radon levels in your home by up to 99 percent. Levels below 4 pCi/L also can pose a health risk and in many cases can be reduced. You can reduce your risk of lung cancer by lowering your radon levels.

The only way to know if you have a radon problem is to test your home. Testing for radon is easy, inexpensive, and only takes a few minutes.

Radon test kits can be purchased at home improvement stores, or a certified radon tester can be hired. Test kits are also available for FREE from DHEC by sending an email to [radon@dhec.sc.gov](mailto:radon@dhec.sc.gov).

### ***Radon Facts***

- Radon is a cancer-causing, natural, radioactive gas.
- Radon causes more than 20,000 deaths each year in the U.S.
- Radon is the leading cause of lung cancer in non-smokers and the second leading cause of lung cancer in smokers in the U.S.
- Radon can be found all over the U.S., including some areas in South Carolina.
- Levels above 70 pCi/L have been found in South Carolina.
- Nearly one out of every 15 homes in the U.S. is estimated to have elevated radon levels.

***For more information:***

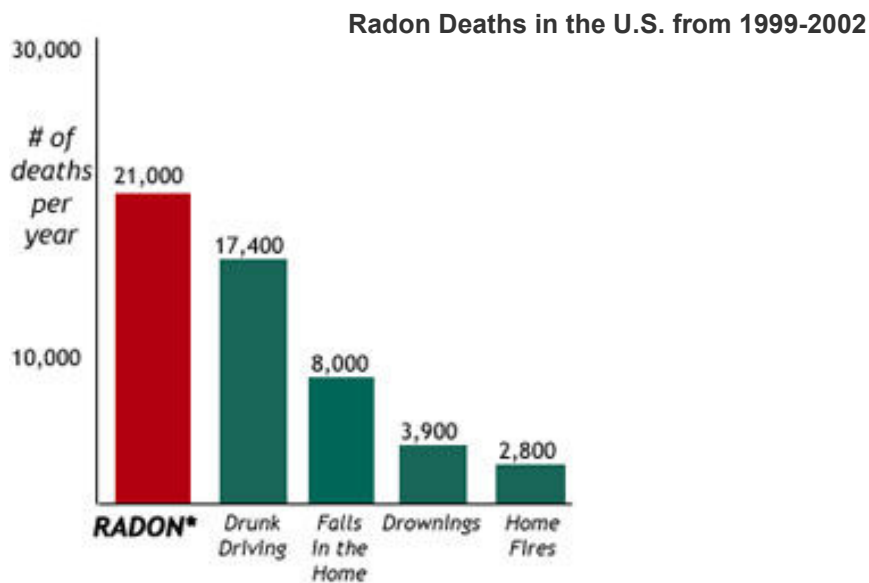
**Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)**

Radon Hotline: (800) SOS-RADON (767-7236)

Radon Web site: <http://www.epa.gov/radon>

**DHEC**

Radon Web site: <http://www.scdhec.gov/environment/envserv/radon.htm>



\* Radon is estimated to cause about 21,000 lung cancer deaths per year in the U.S., according to [EPA's 2003 Assessment of Risks from Radon in Homes \(EPA 402-R-03-003\)](#). The numbers of deaths from other causes are taken from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's 1999-2001 National Center for Injury Prevention and Control Report and 2002 National Safety Council Reports.

*This message has been brought to you by the EQC Education and Outreach Committee and EQC Region 2 – Greenville (Aimee M. Morrow). Visit the EQC Education and Outreach web site at [www.scdhec.gov/eqc/outreach](http://www.scdhec.gov/eqc/outreach) to access more information on DHEC's many environmental education and outreach programs.*